

# AIR FORCE OBSERVES earthweek



## WHAT IS YOUR ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT?

Ever wondered how much "nature" your lifestyle requires? This Ecological Footprint Quiz estimates how much productive land and water you need to support what you use and what you discard. After answering 15 easy questions you'll be able to compare your Ecological Footprint to what other people use and to what is available on this planet.

**<http://www.earthday.net/Footprint/index.asp>**

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## The Air You Breathe

**Air pollution can affect your health and the environment. There are actions every one of us can take to reduce air pollution and keep the air cleaner, and precautionary measures you can take to protect your health**

### Transportation Tips



- ✦ Consider purchasing a "Green Vehicle"
- ✦ Choose a cleaner commute — car pool, use public transportation, bike or walk when possible.
- ✦ Combine errands to reduce "cold starts" of your car and avoid extended idling.
- ✦ Be sure your tires are properly inflated.
- ✦ Keep car, boat and other engines properly tuned, and avoid engines that smoke.
- ✦ Follow gasoline refueling instructions for efficient vapor recovery. Be careful not to spill fuel and always tighten your gas cap securely.



### Household Tips

- ✦ Use environmentally safe paints and cleaning products whenever possible.
- ✦ Some products that you use at your home or office are made with smog-forming chemicals that can evaporate into the air when you use them. Follow manufacturers' recommendations for use and properly seal cleaners, paints, and other chemicals to prevent evaporation into the air.
- ✦ Conserve electricity. Consider setting your thermostat a little higher in the summer and lower in winter. Participate in local energy conservation programs. Look for the ENERGY STAR label when buying home or office equipment.
- ✦ Consider using gas logs instead of wood. If you use a wood-burning stove or fireplace insert, make sure it meets EPA design specifications. Burn only dry, seasoned wood.



### \* Lawn and Garden Tips \*

- ✦ Reduce the use of gas-powered lawn and garden equipment
- ✦ Avoid burning leaves, trash and other materials on ozone action days

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## THE WATER YOU DRINK... EVERY DROP MAKES A DIFFERENCE!

Listen for leaky faucets and toilets that flush themselves  
**FIXING A LEAK CAN SAVE 500 GALLONS A MONTH**

Run your washing machine only when full  
**SAVE UP TO 2,400 GALLONS A MONTH**

Keep your shower under five minutes and install a low-flow showerhead  
**SAVE UP TO 3,000 GALLONS A MONTH**

Install low-volume toilets, or in toilets installed prior to 1980, place a toilet dam (bottle filled with water) in your tank  
**SAVE 480 GALLONS A MONTH FOR A FAMILY OF FOUR**

Don't let water run while shaving or washing your face. Brush your teeth first while waiting for water to get hot, then wash or shave after filling the basin and save 4 gallons/minute  
**1200 GALLONS FOR A FAMILY OF FOUR**

Make sure the toilet flapper doesn't stick open after flushing.  
**Leaky toilet LEAK CAN WASTE 900 GALLONS A MONTH**

**USING THESE TIPS, A FAMILY OF FOUR CAN AVOID WASTING OVER 9,000 GALLONS OF WATER A MONTH!**

**See the links below for additional tips!**





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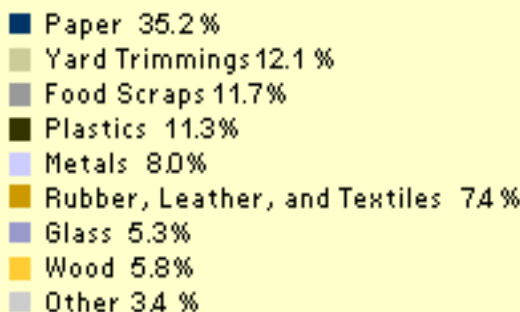


## THE LAND WE LIVE ON

On average, Americans throw out **200,000 tons** of edible food daily.

This country produces approximately **4.5 pounds of municipal Solid Waste (MSW) per person, per day.**

2003 Total Waste Generation—  
236 Million Tons  
(before recycling)



We can reduce our MSW—  
more commonly known as **trash or garbage**—

**reducing it at the the source**

(including reuse), **recycling**, or **composting** organic material. All of these activities **divert waste** from going into a **landfill**. In fact, each year **Congress** requires our installations to **report on the Air Force's waste reduction and diversion** efforts.

**To do your part:** reduce trash at the source by **grasscycling**, **backyard composting**, and **two-sided copying of paper**. Participate in your **local recycling** program, and start a **backyard compost** for food and yard waste.



What is Grasscycling? <http://www.wastediversion.org/grasscycling.htm>

SOURCE: The USEPA website at <http://www.epa.gov/msw/facts.htm>

Want to start a backyard compost? Great activity for the kids.

<http://www.groundwater.org/lc/activity3.html>

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## Actions you can take...to preserve your environment

There are many things that you can do to help save the environment. Here are a few to get you started....

- **Always recycle newspaper, cans, glass and plastic.**
- **Pick up litter and throw it in the trash can.**
- **Find ways to reuse paper.**
- **Donate unwanted items to charity or hold clothing drives.**
- **Recycle used oil and antifreeze by taking them to service stations or other recycling centers. Never put used oil or other chemicals down storm drains. (One quart of oil can contaminate up to 2 million gallons of drinking water.)**
- **Never pour unwanted chemicals on the ground. Soil cannot purify most chemicals.**
- **Use water-based cleaning products whenever possible.**
- **When landscaping, select plants with low requirements for water, fertilizers, and pesticides.**
- **Preserve existing trees and plant trees/shrubs to help prevent erosion and promote infiltration of water into the soil.**
- **Use wood decking, bricks or interlocking stones instead of impervious cement.**
- **Install gravel trenches along driveways or patios to collect water allowing it to filter into the ground.**
- **Leave lawn clippings on your lawn, nutrients are recycled and less waste goes to landfills.**
- **Compost: It is a valuable soil conditioner that gradually releases nutrients to your lawn and garden decreasing the amount of fertilizer and water you need.**

\* (taken from an EPA Journal article, November/December 1991, EPA-22K-1005) by Robert Goo